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ABSTRACT

This study provides the prospective teacher with information concerning the expectations of hiring officials and the practices and policies commonly used in the teacher employment process. A mail survey was sent to officials in 208 districts in Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, and Nebraska. The survey instrument consisted of a checklist and a section made up of open ended questions. Of the 208 questionnaires sent out, 168, or 81 percent, were returned. The survey determined a) a consensus of opinion of hiring officials regarding teacher initiated employment practices, b) basic teacher employment practices, c) suggestions to teacher applicants for improving their chances for success when seeking positions. For the most part, only small differences in item responses by state occurred. Responses to open ended questions were designed for the respondent to express his personal view. These questions concerned pet peeves or gripes, the two most pertinent questions to be asked in an interview, suggestions to college placement officers regarding improvement, suggestions to teacher applicants to improve their chances of getting a job, and any additional pertinent comments. Appendixes are included. (MJM)

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A STUDY OF TEACHER EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

IN

IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI AND NEBRASKA

by

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INTRODUCTION

One of the more perplexing problems facing the prospective teacher is that of securing a desirable teaching position. This situation is becoming increasingly complex as a result of the current "oversupply" of qualified teachers. The job-seeking teacher applicant now finds that he is no longer in a "sellers" market, but rather, the "buyer" presently possesses the advantage in having greater selectivity.

For some time teacher-educators have recognized a need of prospective teachers for more knowledge and skills in the area of securing a position. Much of this area of preparation involves uniform policies and procedures. However, many aspects of the teacher employment procedure vary from district to district and from one hiring official to another.

The major questions involved in this study were what do employing officials expect of teacher applicants and specifically what policies and practices are most commonly used in the teacher employment process?

The purpose of this study was to get answers to the above questions in order to provide more accurate concrete information to prospective teachers. In order to accomplish this end, the following assumption appeared quite logical: Employing officials in the four-state area (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska) could provide information that would be relevant for prospective teachers.

It was decided that a mail survey would be used to determine the following specific information:

1. A concensus of opinion of hiring officials regarding teacher-initiated employment practices.
2. Basic teacher employment practices used by most school districts.
3. Suggestions to teacher applicants for improving their chances for success when seeking positions.

The subjects for the mail survey included 208 districts in the four-state area. Since the more populous districts employ a majority of the newly-hired teachers each year, the sample was weighted toward the larger school systems. All districts of over 7,500 enrollment were sent survey forms. In each of the four states, 25 districts of enrollments of 1,000 to 7,500 were randomly selected. Finally, the appropriate number necessary to bring the total from each state to 52 was randomly selected from districts of enrollments under 1,000.

The survey instrument (Appendix A) consisted of two basic parts: 1) a check-list: and, 2) a section made up of open-ended questions. A cover letter (Appendix B) was designed to explain the purpose of the survey and the need for the cooperation of the subjects.

All survey forms, along with cover letters, were mailed April 19, 1971. Due to the nature of the information requested, it was decided that a follow-up to gain a greater return was unnecessary. No closing date was specified, but after sixty days, final tabulation was initiated. There were no returns after that date.

FINDINGS

Of the 208 questionnaires sent out, 168 or 81 percent were returned. There was only a slight difference in the percentage return by state with a range of 75 to 87 percent. For the most part only small differences in item responses by state occurred, therefore, the data are revealed as a composite presentation. The few marked differences by state that do exist in responses are emphasized in the text of the report.

Data gathered in this survey were divided into three basic categories: 1) selection criteria: 2) employment procedures; and, 3) responses to open-ended questions.

Sources of Teacher Applicants and Selection Criteria

Each question in this part of the survey instrument asked for a ranking of from five to eight items. To present the data in a meaningful manner a percentage score has been calculated on the basis of a weighted value assigned to each rank with 100 percent being the highest possible mark. In other words, if all respondents indicated a rank of "one" for a given response, the percentage mark for that choice would be 100 percent. A full explanation of the method used in determining percentage scores can be found in Appendix C. The choice "0" for "no value" was not used in determining the percentage mark. Tables are presented for each of the questions in this area listing the choices as they ranked (by average) from high to low and indicate the percentage scores for comparison purposes.

Sources of Teacher Applicants

Table I indicates that college or university placement bureaus are considered by far the most important source of teacher applicants. One major difference by state was noted in response to "Newspaper advertisements". Respondents from Iowa ranked this choice much higher than employers from the other three states. Nine Iowa administrators ranked this number one while no respondent from the other states gave it such importance. Over all, sixty-nine employing officials indicated that "Newspaper advertisements" were of no value as a source of teacher applicants.

The source which appeared to be used least was the "Commercial teacher agencies". Not only was its average rank the lowest of all other sources listed, but 81 of all respondents indicated that this source was of "no value" to them as a source of teacher applicants.

TABLE I

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER APPLICANTS SOURCES

Rank	Score	Description
1	91%	College or university placement bureaus
2	72%	Personal contacts
3	71%	Letters of inquiry
4	54%	Newspaper advertisements
5	32%	Commercial teacher agencies

Teacher Selection Criteria

This portion of the survey requested that hiring officials make an assessment of factors involved in the teacher selection process. Table II presents the respondents average ranking of basic teacher application procedures. It should be pointed out that the four top-ranking choices are considered essential in the employment

process. Although these four choices are interrelated and dependent upon each other, the personal interview is clearly indicated to be the most important factor.

TABLE II

IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Rank	Score	Description
1	88%	The personal interview
2	83%	Professional placement credentials
3	54%	The completed application form
4	50%	The letter of application
5	45%	Information secured from personal acquaintances

Table III gives evidence that when considering experienced teachers the respondents are most interested in letters of reference from previous school employers. Of the criteria listed, letters from professional people other than educators were assessed as being the least important.

The high importance placed on the student teaching experience when considering inexperienced teacher prospects is indicated in Table IV where letters from the cooperating classroom teacher and the college student teacher supervisor rank one and two respectively. As was indicated with experienced teacher applicants, little importance is placed on letters from the professional people other than educators.

TABLE III

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT CRITERIA
WHEN CONSIDERING EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

Rank	Score	Description
1	95%	Letters of reference from school employers
2	68%	Letters of reference from college student teacher supervisor or cooperating classroom teacher
3	57%	List of previous teaching experiences
4	47%	Letters of reference from college faculty members
5	36%	List of graduate and undergraduate courses
6	32%	Student teaching grade
7	25%	Undergraduate GPA
8	21%	Letters of reference from professional people other than educators

TABLE IV

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT CRITERIA
WHEN CONSIDERING INEXPERIENCED TEACHERS

Rank	Score	Description
1	90%	Letters of reference: cooperating classroom teacher
2	77%	Letters of reference: college student teacher supervisor
3	55%	Letters of reference: college faculty members
4	47%	Student teacher grade
5.5	35%	List of undergraduate courses
5.5	35%	Overall GPA
7.5	30%	Letters of reference: professional people other than educators
7.5	30%	List of extra-curricular activities

There was little difference (Table V) in the top four ranking characteristics displayed in the employment interviews. It is interesting to note that being "Well-informed about the district" ranks at the bottom of the five characteristics listed.

TABLE V

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTERISTICS DISPLAYED BY THE APPLICANT IN THE PERSONAL INTERVIEW

Rank	Score	Description
1	78%	Appearance of being genuinely interested in the position
2.5	72%	Neat and well-groomed appearance
2.5	72%	Self-confident and poised appearance
4	71%	Facility for verbal communication
5	24%	Well informed about the school district

Concerning assessments of the different aspects of the application letter, data in Table VI suggest that the respondents placed the greatest importance on neatness. "Originality", and "Proper business letter form", were indicated as being decidedly less important than the three basic factors ranking, one, two, and three.

TABLE VI

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE LETTER OF APPLICATION

Rank	Score	Description
1	90%	Neatly written
2	80%	Grammatically correct
3	70%	Relevant content
4	49%	Originality
5	46%	Proper business letter form

Employment Procedures

The questions in this area called for a yes or no response. By content they were logically divided into two categories: 1) teacher applicant employment procedures, and 2) employer hiring procedures.

The "teacher applicant procedures" involve activities that may be initiated and accomplished by the teacher applicant. The "employer hiring procedures" relate to practices controlled directly by the school administrators.

Teacher Applicant Procedures

In this section hiring officials were asked their opinions regarding certain teacher-applicant procedures. Table VII presents data indicating how the 168 administrators responded to the various questions. Eighty percent of the hiring officials indicated that they preferred that a resume be enclosed with the letter of application.

Opinions regarding whether or not "advertising teacher vacancies in newspapers is a professional practice" were split almost exactly in half. In examining the returns it was interesting to note a decided difference by states on this particular question. The Iowa administrators favor the practice of advertising teacher vacancies most strongly with 80 percent of this group responding positively. Nebraska officials indicated a slight majority felt this practice was alright. The majority of administrators polled in Kansas and Missouri were against the practice, Kansas respondents by a slight edge and Missouri subjects by 70 percent.

A large percentage of the respondents indicated that they did <u>not</u> object to applicants contacting them by telephone either as the initial contact or as a follow-up after the interview. The percentages were 77 and 70 respectively.

Seventy-seven percent of the survey subjects indicated that they did not object to receiving a letter of application which had been written by hand rather than typewritten. A few said they preferred the handwritten letter. Thirty-six of the subjects did, however, indicate that they objected to handwritten application letters.

The last question in this general area asked if the applicant was required to complete an employment application form. Seventy percent responded affirmatively to this question.

TABLE VII

ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS CONCERNING APPLICANT EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES

N = 168

Questions	Responding YES	Responding NO	Failing to Respond
Do you prefer that applicant include resume with letter of application?	134	31	3
Do you prefer that applicant enclose a stamped, pre-addressed envelope?	62	101	5
Do you consider advertising teacher vacancies in newspapers a professional practice?	82	80	6
Do you object to the applicant making his initial contact by telephone?	29	130	9
Do you object to the applicant contacting you by telephone after the interview?	41	119	8
Do you object to receiving a letter of application which has been hand written rather than typed?	36	129	3
Do you require the applicant to complete an application form?	119	48	1

Employer Hiring Procedures

This section of the survey instrument contained questions having from three to five choices. In each of the questions it was possible for a given administrator to select two or more options. Tables eight through eleven indicate the number of responses for each choice. The data presented in the tables are limited in that they do not reveal combinations of choices. Table VIII provides data relative to documents provided teacher applicants by the school districts. The single document provided by nearly all (90 percent) districts in the survey was the"Salary schedule." The next two in order of rank were the "Brochure describing the school"(52%) and the "Brochure describing the community"(49%).

Although not presented in tabular form, a perusal of the tally sheets revealed that 77 districts (46%) provided all three of the above-mentioned documents. Twenty-nine percent of the respondents signified that they provided "Printed-job description for administrative and supervisory positions." A cursory examination of the returns gave evidence that respondents to this choice were mainly from the larger districts. The most frequent item listed in the "Other" choice was school calendar. One provided a statement of the school district's philosophy of education.

TABLE VIII

PRINTED MATERIALS PROVIDED JOB APPLICANTS

N = 168

Documents	Responses
Brochure describing schools	88
Brochure describing community	82
Salary schedule	151
Printed job description for administrators and supervisory positions	49
Other	13

Table IX presents data in answer to the question "who interviews the candidate?" In 82 percent of the responding districts the building principal interviewed the candidate. "The superintendent" was indicated an an interviewer by 75 percent of the respondents. The "Personnel director" served as an interviewer in 34 percent of the survey districts. As would be expected this group consisted of the larger districts in the survey. Relatively few districts involved a selection committee in the interview situation. The practice of "School board members" interviewing teacher applicants was nearly non-existant in the responding districts. All of the respondents indicating this practice were from the smaller school districts. Of the 18 administrators indicating the "Other" choice most specified the department chairman as an interviewer. In nearly all cases there was an indication that the teacher applicant was interviewed by more than one individual.

TABLE IX

WHO INTERVIEWS THE CANDIDATE?

N = 168 Interviewer	Responses
Building principal	138
Personnel director	58
School board members	11
Selection committee	13
The superintendent	123
Other	18

Inspection of Table X discloses that in most of the districts surveyed the "Building principal" and the "Superintendent" played the major roles in deciding who will be offered contracts. An examination of the returns indicated that in

the majority of cases, the superintendent and the principal made the selection jointly. It appeared also that the districts that have personnel directors, involve them in the selection process. Only a small percentage of the cases (five percent) used a "Selection committee" for this function. Of those listing "Other" options, some indicated the "Department chairman" and one listed "School board members."

TABLE X

WHO MAKES THE SELECTION?

N = 168 Selector	Responses
Building principal	95
Personnel director	54
Selection committee	9
The superintendent	111
Other	13

Examination of Table XI reveals that seventy percent of the administrators send letters to all applicants after the interview, telling of their acceptance or rejection. Fifty-one percent of the survey districts inform successful candidates by telephone. In twenty percent of the districts, only the successful candidates were sent letters.

TABLE XI

FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES USED AFTER THE INTERVIEW

N = 168 Procedure	Responses
Inform successful candidate by telephone	86
Send letter to each applicant informing him of acceptance or rejection	119
Send letters only to successful candidates	34
Other	4

The last question in the checklist portion of the survey instrument was designed to point out the relative importance of the various basic facets of the total employment procedure. Specifically it asked respondents to estimate the percentage of applicants rejected on the basis of: "Letter of application", "Resume", "Professional credentials" and "Personal interview." Although, examination of the returns indicated the question was unclear, the following major point was apparent: Most teacher applicants are eliminated from the competition on the basis of their professional credentials and the personal interview.

Responses to Open-ended Questions

The final section in the survey instrument was devoted to five open-ended questions which were designed for the respondent to express his personal views regarding each question. Since this type of question entailed a verbal response which would be time consuming, it was feared by the writers that this section might limit the number of returns. Consequently, respondents were encouraged but not required to complete these questions as part of the study. Fortunately, most of those completing the questions went into detail and spent considerable time in answering each question. Therefore, the response information submitted in this section appears to provide many insights which should prove valuable to teacher applicants. Due to the large number of replies to each item, the responses were grouped for reporting purposes into related categories. In an effort to condense the report, only responses which were common to two or more respondents were reported.

The five questions asked in this section were:

1. List any pet peeves or gripes you have about teacher applicants.
2. List the two questions you feel most pertinent to be asked in the employment interview.
3. List any suggestions you can make to college placement officers for improving their services to you.
4. List any suggestions you can make to teacher applicants for improving their chances for employment.
5. Make any additional comments you consider beneficial to the study.

Responses to Question Concerning Pet Peeves or Gripes

One of the most interesting questions and perhaps one of the most relevant to teacher candidates was an open-ended question which permitted the respondent to make reference to any personal pet peeves or gripes concerning teacher applicants. There was a total of 142 responses to this question. These responses were placed in the following three categories along with the percentage in each: personal interview-31%, application for position-21%, and personal qualities of candidate-45%. Since many of the responses were of a similar nature, only 44 of the 143 items will be mentioned.

Application for position

1. Receiving poorly written letters of application with grammatical errors.
2. Sending letters of application when there is no vacancy.
3. Stopping by or calling before sending a letter of application or credentials.
4. Collect telephone calls by candidates without permission.
5. Sending duplicated letters of application, shot-gun approach.
6. Failing to include essential information in letters of application. A complete resume with each letter of application is necessary for us to determine whether or not we wish to follow up the applicant. Time is too precious to follow-up on unknown factors.
7. Women who don't indicate "Miss" or "Mrs." on letter of application.
8. Sending form letters of application.
9. Applicants who circumvent the proper employment procedures by contacting board of education members directly.
10. Contacting influential people in the community to speak in their interest.

The Interview

1. Arriving late for interview or failing to show up without proper notification.
2. Those who try to "lead" the interview.
3. Bringing open letters of reference.
4. Bringing friends or relatives along with them to the interview.
5. Insisting on interview before we have screened applicants to select those desired for the interview.
6. Wanting interviews during inconvenient times such as Sundays, holidays, etc.
7. Appearing for personal interview without appointment, just dropping in.
8. Opening interview with questions about teacher welfare such as retirement, sick leave, etc.
9. Applicants that do not look interviewer in the eye.
10. Applicants who have a tendency to talk too much.
11. Calling for an interview and then not sending letter of application.
12. Some applicants feel they have to agree with everything the interviewer says: no personal opinions.
13. Applicants who know all the answers but can't ask intelligent questions.
14. Poor preparation for interview.
15. Candidate who appears too agressive and the "debators."
16. Appearing for an interview just for the experience.

Personal qualities of candidate

1. Slow to answer correspondence.
2. The use of "I" in selling themselves.
3. Teacher candidates who cannot properly respond to: "What contribution do you expect to make to the lives of children in your classroom?"
4. Telling of personal needs for the position.
5. Attempting to pin down the precise time the decision for employment will be made.
6. Making comments that would suggest the applicant is more interested in the salary than the work.
7. Those who appear to be doing you a favor by applying.
8. Lack of knowledge of how schools operate.
9. Applicants that use their current school's envelopes and letterhead.
10. Candidates who are not aware of or willing to accept the "extra" jobs they will be responsible for. (ticket selling, sponsorships, etc.)
11. Not informing an employer when they have taken another position.
12. Candidates who are uninformed on current educational issues.
13. Don't like candidates to mention that they have been offered a contract in another district unless asked.
14. No long hair please! At least have a neat haircut and dress.
15. Many are so subject and knowledge centered they have very few thoughts about the child as a learner.
16. Contacting influential people in the community to speak in their interest.
17. Candidates that leave or place items on my desk.
18. Candidates coming in with a "hippie" look.
19. Bragging about previous achievements.

Common Questions Asked by the Employer in the Interview

To successfully prepare for an interview it is advisable for the candidate to personally formulate responses to anticipated questions which the interviewer might ask. In attempt to ascertain some of the questions asked by employing officials the following open-ended question was used: What questions do you consider most pertinent to ask candidates during the interview?

The 182 questions submitted by the respondents fell into five general categories. These categories as well as the percent of questions pertaining to each category are 1) personal opinion and background (44 percent), 2) teaching-learning process (31 percent), 3) discipline (10 percent), 4) ability to get along with people (8 percent), and 5) education and experience (7 percent).

Personal opinions and background

1. Why did you decide on teaching as a career?
2. Tell something about your personal background.
3. What is your impression of today's youth?
4. Why are you interested in our school and community?
5. What are your feelings about strong community teacher associations and teacher militancy?
6. What are your professional plans for the future . . . advanced degree, program or goals?
7. What hobbies and interests do you have?
8. Why did you choose your particular subject area or grade level?
9. Do you plan to make a career out of teaching?
10. What is your philosophy of education?
11. What do you honestly consider to be your strongest trait? Your weakest?
12. What was the single greatest highlight of your college career?
13. If you could spend a day doing anything you wanted to, what would you do?
14. Do you think you will be a successful teacher? Why?
15. Why should we employ you?
16. What do you have to offer as a candidate that no other candidate has to offer?
17. What are your views on current state and national events?
18. What are your feelings in reference to extra duty activities?

The teaching-learning process

1. How would you individualize the learning process in the classroom?
2. What "pet" ideas or innovations do you have in mind in regard to the area of curriculum in which you will be teaching?
3. Will you attend school events held other than on school time?
4. What methods of instruction do you feel that you can use which will present the most desirable learning situation for students?
5. What are some of the proposed objectives that you hope to achieve in your subject or grade?
6. What do you consider to be the "ideal" learning environment.
7. What can you do to improve learning opportunities for children in your subject area or grade?
8. What do you consider to be some of the most worthwhile innovations presently taking place in your subject area or grade?
9. Tell me how you expect to personally motivate children.
10. Would you enjoy and feel comfortable team teaching?
11. Are you prepared to individualize your instruction and to diagnose and prescribe on an individual basis?
12. What do you consider to be some of the current educational needs and problems of students?

Discipline

1. What is your philosophy in regard to discipline?
2. Do you anticipate any difficulty in classroom control? (expand answer)
3. How would you handle severe discipline problems?
4. What types of classroom atmosphere would you attempt to organize and establish?
5. Do you feel that you can maintain good classroom discipline?
6. How successful have you been in your previous experience in controlling student discipline?

Ability to get along with people

1. Do you feel that you can get along with other members of the faculty?
2. What thoughts and ideas do you have regarding your role and obligations to other faculty members as a part of the total team.
3. Do you get along well with most people?
4. What human quality in other persons is most important to you?
5. What is your opinion of a number of different people; your high school principal, your student teacher supervisor, others who have been in a position of authority over you?
6. How much loyalty do you feel that you owe to the administration?
7. Do you feel that you are capable of communicating with today's youth?

Education and Experience

1. Are you eligible for teaching certificate? What subjects are you certified to teach?
2. How competent do you think you are?
3. Were you successful in your student teaching or previous teaching assignment?
4. What qualifications do you possess that no other candidate has?
5. What is the most important characteristic of the successful teacher?
6. Do you really have a concern for children?
7. What training and experiences have you had that gives you confidence that you are qualified for the position that you seek?
8. Based upon your student teaching or past experience, how would you evaluate yourself as a teacher?
9. Where have you previously taught?
10. Tell me about your student teaching or previous teaching experience.
11. What kind of work experience have you had other than teaching?
12. What kind of experience have you had which would be of help to you when you begin teaching?
13. Why are you leaving your present position?

Suggestions to College Placement Officers For Improving Their Services to Hiring Officials

In general most of the responses were quite favorable regarding the services rendered by college and university placement offices from the four states included in the study. Most of the respondents indicated that they were quite pleased with the assistance granted from the college placement offices.

The most recurring comment or criticism was concerned with getting the credentials out more efficiently during the peak employment period (March, April, and May).

1. Keep current list of teacher candidates up-to-date.
2. Insist that teacher applicants notify the placement office as soon as they have signed a contract.

3. Publish and distribute a list of seniors each semester who are available for teaching positions. Included in this list should be a brief resume of the candidates' teaching field, address, telephone number, etc.
4. Schedule "Special Placement Days" on campus for all schools and applicants.
5. Make all vacancy notices available to all candidates and not just to a selected few.
6. Indicate on the front page of the credentials the areas in which the candidates are certified to teach.
7. Include copies of certified transcripts with credentials.
8. Credentials should contain fewer references from college professors.
9. Include a hand-written autobiography with each set of credentials.
10. It would be advantageous if all college personnel credential forms were similar.
11. Most references are too general to be of much value;they should identify specific strengths and weaknesses of candidates.

Suggestions to Applicants for Improving Their Chances for Employment

Question number 22 presented the employer with an opportunity to offer suggestions to teacher applicants for improving their chances for employment. In many instances respondents used this item to expand views expressed on previous questions. The suggestions were grouped into the following three general categories; application for position, employment, and miscellaneous.

Application for Position

1. Be very careful in writing your letter of application. Make sure that it is accurate, neat and the spelling is correct.
2. Write an interesting letter of application with some originality. Try to be able to stress something unique about your application that would make you a more desirable employee.
3. Follow the proper procedure in applying for a position. Apply only for positions that are available and go through the proper employment channels.
4. Only apply for vacancies that you are willing to make a strong try in securing. Find out about the school district, city, etc.

Employment Interview

1. Be well dressed and groomed when you go for an interview.
2. During the interview, be forthright, tell it like you see it. In other words. candidates should give their own views, not what they think someone wants to hear. They won't be happy if they accept the position and are not really satisfied.
3. If you are interested in the position, be enthusiastic and ask intelligent questions about the school, its policies, basic philosophy, and the educational program.
4. Candidates should be honest in evaluating themselves and their qualifications and don't attempt to oversell themselves.

5. Be prepared to answer questions with some strong evidence of your conviction on certain matters.
6. Exhibit your concern for human beings.
7. Be friendly, courteous, and relaxed and do not assume that you have all the answers.

Miscellaneous

1. Present a positive attitude. Don't complain about conditions in last position or other previous experiences.
2. Small schools need candidates who are prepared to teach in more than one field.
3. Be willing to accept additional assignments as needed by the school system.
4. Participate or take courses that are non-academically oriented, i.e. athletics, music, photography, annual, newspaper, etc.

Additional Comments You Consider Beneficial to the Study

Most of the comments submitted to this question pertained to items previously mentioned in the study. Consequently, a complete listing of responses to item number 23 was considered unnecessary. However, of particular interest was the frequency of mention as to the need for and dissemination of the information gained from this and related studies.

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to determine answers to the following questions: What do employing officials expect of teacher applicants and what policies and practices are most commonly used in the teacher employment process? This was accomplished by means of a mail survey sent to a sample of 208 school superintendents or personnel officers in the four midwestern states of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.

Eighty-one percent of those queried returned completed survey forms. The gathered data were organized into three basic categories: 1) Sources of teacher applicants and selection criteria, 2) Employment procedures, and, 3) Responses to open-ended questions.

Sources of Teacher Applicants and Selection Criteria

Regarding sources of teacher applicants, it was found that the teacher employing officials depend most highly on "College and university teacher placement offices". "Personal contacts" and "Letters of inquiry" were also indicated as valuable means of discovering interested teacher applicants. In the state of Iowa "Newspaper advertisements" were frequently used for this purpose.

The personal interview was regarded by most of the respondents as the most important criterion in the teacher selection process. However, "Professional placement credentials" were ranked nearly as high.

Concerning relative importance of items contained in the professional credentials, "Letters of reference from school employers" received the highest average rating when administrators were considering experienced teachers. When considering inexperienced, they placed the most importance on "Letters of reference from the cooperating classroom teacher" or "Letters of reference from the college student teacher supervisor".

The question regarding characteristics displayed in the personal interview contained several choices which were very basic, therefore, no one item emerged as having much greater importance than any of the others. "Appearance of being genuinely interested in the position" did take a slight edge as being indicated as the most important.

The quality of being "Neatly written" emerged as the most important factor in the letter of application. However, two other basic factors "Grammatically correct" and "Relevant content" also received relatively high average ratings.

Employment Procedures

The first section under employment procedures involved practices which may be initiated and accomplished by the teacher applicant. A review of Table VII will give the reader at a glance the complete picture of responses to questions in this section. Suggestions by the writers to teacher applicants based on responses to questions in this area are:

1. A resume should be included with the letter of application.
2. Since about 37 percent of the administrators indicated a preference for the practice, to be safe, a stamped, pre-addressed envelope should be included with the application letter.
3. Most hiring officials do not object to being contacted by telephone as the initial contact. However, unless the applicant is pressed for time, he should use the conventional letter of application for the initial contact.
4. Since about one fourth of the employment officials object to a phone call after the interview, the applicant should refrain from phoning unless there are extenuating circumstances.
5. Even though only about one-fifth of the respondents objected to the hand-written letter of application, this appears to b a large enough portion to suggest that the letter be typed.

Data concerning hiring procedures controlled directly by policy or the school administrators were covered in the final part of this section. Major points emphasized were:

1. About half of the responding districts provide the applicant with a brochure describing their schools.
2. About half of the responding districts provide the applicant with a brochure describing the community.

3. Nearly all of the responding districts provide the applicant with a teacher salary schedule.
4. The superintendent and the building principal were involved in the interview more often than any other hiring official.
5. In most districts the applicant was required to interview with two or more persons.
6. About seven percent of the responding districts involved school board members in the interview.
7. In a majority of responding districts, the superintendent and the principal make the employment selection jointly.
8. About half of the responding districts inform successful candidates of their employment by telephone.
9. The majority of districts send a letter to each applicant informing him of his acceptance or rejection.

Responses to Open-ended Questions

The final phase of the study was devoted to questions which permitted prospective employers the opportunity to relate personal opinions regarding selected items. Throughout this section the most recurring comment expressed concerned some facet associated with dress and appearance of teacher applicants. For example, the following quotation from a superintendent of schools quite appropriately expresses his views concerning this subject:

> "I guess my age of 40 influences this--but I hate young men applicants who have hair to their shoulders! These applicants will have to be the strongest looking prospects in the world before I ever offer them a contract. Also, I respect (and sometimes enjoy) the mini-skirt. However, young lady applicants who sit opposite me in the interview with legs crossed, and skirt "hiked" clear up to their hind-end may turn me on physically, but not educationally!!

Of particular significance to employers are the initial written and personal contacts made by the applicant. These initial contacts are generally associated with the letter of application and the personal interview. Employers repeatedly emphasized the importance of a neatly written and grammatically correct letter of application. Also of considerable importance is the candidate's personal appearance at the interview as well as his ability to present a sincere interest in teaching and more specifically a special interest in the particular position for which he is applying.

The majority of questions asked by the employers during the interview are concerned with the personal opinion of the candidate which provides insight into his or her ability to teach. For example, the most frequently asked questions were "Why did you decide on teaching as a career?" and "What is your philosophy of education?"

Most of the comments concerning the services provided by the college placement bureau were quite favorable. However, several respondents mentioned a desire for more efficient service during the peak employment period.

The majority of suggestions to applicants for improving their chances for employment could be placed in a category entitled common sense. Most of the comments were concerned with the do's and don'ts of employment practices.

Conclusion

The decade of the seventies has been ushered in with a pronounced surplus of teachers in nearly all teaching fiels. Not since pre-World War II days have teachers experienced the difficulty that they are now facing in securing positions. The attitude of many employing officials was quite appropriately expressed by one of the respondents who stated that "the economic and teacher situation has changed drastically. We are closer to asking the applicant, what can you do for us? and why should we employ you?" With the advent of the "buyers" market it becomes imperative that the prospective candidate be as knowledgeable as possible of all the facets involved in securing a position.

APPENDIX A

STUDY OF TEACHER EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

I. For each item in this section, rank each choice according to its importance to you in your own teacher selection process. (use number 1 = most important, number 2 = second most important, etc. For each choice that is of no value to you, mark a 0 beside it.)

1. Rank the importance of the following sources of teacher candidates.
_____ Commercial teacher agencies
_____ College or university placement bureaus
_____ Letters of inquiry
_____ Newspaper advertisements
_____ Personal contacts
_____ Other (please specify)

2. Rank the importance of the following as screening factors in your teacher selection process.
_____ The completed application form (if used by your district)
_____ Information secured from personal acquaintances
_____ The letter of application
_____ Professional placement credentials
_____ The personal interview
_____ Other (please specify)

3. When considering experienced teachers rank the importance of the following items contained in the professional placement credentials.
_____ Letters of reference: College faculty members
_____ Letters of reference: College student teacher supervisor or cooperating classroom teacher
_____ Letters of reference: Professional people other than educators
_____ Letters of reference: School employers
_____ List of previous teaching experiences
_____ List of undergraduate and graduate courses
_____ Student teaching grade
_____ Undergraduate grade point average
_____ Other (please specify)

4. When considering inexperienced teachers rank the importance of the following items contained in the professional placement credentials.
_____ Letters of reference: College faculty members
_____ Letters of reference: Cooperating classroom teacher
_____ Letters of reference: College student teacher supervisor
_____ Letters of reference: Professional people other than educators
_____ List of extra-curricular activities
_____ Overall grade point average
_____ Student teaching grade
_____ Other (please specify)

5. Rank the importance of the following characteristics displayed by the applicant in the personal interview.

_____ Appearance of being genuinely interested in the position
_____ Facility for verbal communication
_____ Neat and well-groomed appearance
_____ Self-confident and poised appearance
_____ Well-informed about your school district
_____ Other (please specify)

6. Rank the importance of the following aspects of the letter of application.

_____ Grammatically correct
_____ Neatly written
_____ Originality
_____ Proper business letter form
_____ Relevant content
_____ Other (please specify)

II. In this section, please check either yes or no for each item.

7. Do you prefer that a resume be enclosed with the letter of application?

_____ yes
_____ no

8. Do you prefer that the applicant enclose a stamped, preaddressed envelope?

_____ yes
_____ no

9. Do you consider advertising teacher vacancies in newspapers a professional practice?

_____ yes
_____ no

10. Do you object to the applicant making his initial contact by telephone?

_____ yes
_____ no

11. Do you object to the applicant contacting you by telephone after the interview?

_____ yes
_____ no

12. Do you object to receiving a letter of application which has been written by hand rather than typed?

_____ yes
_____ no

13. Do you require the applicant to complete an application form?

_____ yes
_____ no

III. In this section, please check the appropriate choice(s) for each item.

14. What printed materials do you provide job applicants?
_____ Brochure describing schools
_____ Brochure describing the community
_____ Salary schedule
_____ Printed job description on administrative and supervisory positions
_____ Other (please specify)

15. In your district who interviews the candidate?
_____ Building principal
_____ Personnel director
_____ School board members
_____ Selection committee
_____ The superintendent
_____ Other (please specify)

16. In your district, who makes the selection?
_____ Building principal
_____ Personnel director
_____ Selection committee
_____ The superintendent
_____ Other (please specify)

17. What follow-up procedure you **use after the interview**?
_____ Inform successful candidate by telephone
_____ Send letter to each applicant informing them of acceptance or rejection
_____ Send letter only to successful candidate
_____ Other (please specify)

18. Of the total number of applicants that you reject, please check what percentage are rejected on the basis of each of the following:

0-10%	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	70% +	
____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	Letter of application
____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	Resume
____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	Professional Credentials
____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	Personal Interview
____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	Other (please specify)

IV. This section involves open-ended questions requiring more time than questions in the previous sections of the study. Although we would like to have the information asked for in this section, if you feel that it is too time consuming, you may omit it.

19. Please list any pet peeves or gripes you have about teacher applicants.

20. Please list the two questions you feel most pertinent to be asked in the employment interview?

21. Please list any suggestions you can make to college placement officers for improving their services to you.

22. Please list any suggestions you can make to teacher applicants for improving their chances for employment.

23. Please make any additional comments you consider beneficial to the study.

24. Would you like to have a summary of the results of this study?

_____ yes

_____ no

APPENDIX B

April 19, 1971

Dear Employing Official:

One of the more perplexing problems facing our teacher graduates today is that of securing a position. This problem is becoming more complex and of greater concern to our graduates today as a result of the increased competition encountered in seeking teaching positions. As a result of this dilemma it is essential that prospective teachers become aware of your acceptable and desirable employment policies and practices. In order to better inform teacher candidates of these procedures we have decided to obtain information from school administrators who have the responsibility of employing teachers. To do this, 200 school districts from the states of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska have been selected to participate in the survey.

It is our intent that the results of this study will be of value to teacher candidates as well as to those who are responsible for their employment. Therefore, we would appreciate your cooperation in filling out the enclosed form and returning it as soon as possible.

No individual or school district responses will be identified in the publication of the results of this study. The returns will be treated in a strictly confidential manner.

Sincerely,

Merle R. Lesher
Stanley L Wade

Merle R. Lesher
Stanley L. Wade
Assistant Professors of Education

MRL/SLW/jv

APPENDIX C

METHOD OF DETERMINING PERCENTAGE SCORES QUESTIONS ONE THROUGH SIX

1. The following weighting pattern was assigned:

Rank	Weight
1	5
2	4
3	3
4	2
5	1

2. The average rank was calculated for each response and multiplied by 20 to provide a maximum score of 100 percent. For example in Table I the 91 percent score was determined as follows:

Rank	f	Wt	f x wt
1	107	5	535
2	35	4	140
3	14	3	42
4	2	2	4
5	0	1	0
	N = 158		721

$$\% \text{ Score} = \frac{f \times Wt.}{N} \cdot 20$$

$$= \frac{721}{158} \cdot 20$$

$$= \frac{4.56}{1} \cdot 20$$

$$= 91$$